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ABSTRACT

This book describes the teaching experiences of Stella Gipson Polk, who taught in one-room schools in rural Texas. She was 16 at the time she took her first teaching job in 1918. After high school graduation, she had intended to enter a 4-year college or university. However, World War I left numerous schools without teachers as many were called into the service. Stella was persuaded by her sister and brother-in-law, who were both teachers, to take the state examination so that she could replace her brother-in-law when he left for the war. In 1921 she married Jack Polk, a rancher, and in 1930 their son Jackie was born. She continued to teach, taking her son with her to school. She gave up her dream of attending college as $80 a month was too much to pass up during the depression. Stella tells of the creativity needed to teach children of different ages, different backgrounds, and on occasion, different languages. She also describes the close and important relationship the school had with the community. In 1945 consolidation began, and within 2 years all the one-room schools had closed and children were bussed to town to attend school. She describes the initial problems with consolidation and her own feelings at losing the intimacy she had with her students in one-room schools. Stella Gipson Polk retired from teaching in 1965. (LP)

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